

Agricultural Research Division
Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Undergraduate Honors Student Research Program

INTRODUCTION

The Agricultural Research Division (ARD) is committed to providing selected University Honors Program students with an exceptional undergraduate research experience to fulfill their thesis requirement. Funds designated by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Reallocation Plan and unit matching funds support the *ARD Undergraduate Honors Student Research Program*. The *ARD Undergraduate Honors Student Research Program* will support qualified junior or senior students working with ARD scientists to conduct research in agriculture, biology, human resources and natural resources. This competitive grant program will also acquaint students with the scientific method, provide strong research and learning experiences, stimulate interest in teaching and research careers, and inform students about the opportunities in graduate study.

GUIDELINES

Student Eligibility

The program is open to junior and senior University Honors Program students proposing to conduct their thesis research with faculty who have an ARD appointment. Preference in the selection process will be given to students enrolled in - AGRI 299H (*Honors Thesis Seminar*). Students should enroll in the appropriate undergraduate thesis course during the period of mentored research. Previous student recipients are not eligible to apply.

Faculty Thesis Advisor

A faculty member with an ARD appointment will serve as a thesis advisor and work directly with the student. Faculty thesis advisors will be identified and work with students enrolled in AGRI 299H to develop a research project proposal. Upper Division University Honors Program students not enrolled in AGRI 299H are encouraged to work independently with an ARD faculty member to prepare a thesis proposal for consideration.

The student will complete their thesis project by working directly with the faculty thesis advisor or with staff who are part of the faculty member's research program. The faculty thesis advisor is responsible for assigning a grade for the thesis.

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Funding

ARD will provide funding up to \$ 2,500 per student, for a maximum of 12 months within one fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). Funds will be available on July 1. Funds cannot be carried over to the following fiscal year. Matching funds from departments and faculty research programs are required, but no percentage match is stipulated. Funds may be used for operating and student hourly. Unexpended funds will be returned to ARD.

Funds will be transferred to the faculty member's research account to support the proposed research. Students will not receive funds directly.

Application

Students will be selected based on their project proposal. The proposal shall be authored by the student with guidance from the faculty thesis advisor. The proposal shall contain the following:

- a. Cover page that includes:
 - (1) Concise title for proposed thesis topic;
 - (2) Student's name, major, name of undergraduate advisor, proposed undergraduate thesis advisor, student ID number, campus address, telephone number, and e-mail address;
 - (3) Signature of the undergraduate advisor approving the proposed project as a thesis topic.
 - (4) Course prefix and number under which the thesis work /independent study is being completed.
- b. A clear statement of the problem and explanation of how the proposed thesis research will address the problem (maximum 1 page);
- c. A workplan that includes goals, objectives, methods, and a timeline (maximum 2 pages);
- d. A budget listing materials, equipment, stipends, and/or student wages, limited to a \$ 2,500 request, and a list of sources and amounts of match dollars (approved by the faculty thesis advisor) (maximum 1 page);
- e. A letter from the faculty thesis advisor describing acceptance of the project and the proposed working relationship with the student;
- f. A letter describing the student's career goals (maximum 1 page)
- g. An independent study contract (available from the **CASNR Dean's Office**, 103 Agricultural Hall) that describes the joint expectations of the faculty thesis advisor and student for fulfilling the grading requirement. The faculty thesis advisor is encouraged to include the following expectations:
 - A written thesis in the style of an appropriate professional journal;
 - Thesis evaluation by the faculty thesis advisor and a second faculty reader; and
 - An oral defense. This type of experience will provide the

- student with valuable insight into the graduate student experience.
- h. Proposals will be solicited in the fall and spring.

Selection Process

The Selection Committee will be comprised of a three-member subcommittee of the ARD Advisory Council (two members must have teaching appointments), the College Directors of the Honors Program in CASNR and CHRFS (ex-officio, non-voting) and the Dean and Director of the ARD, or designee.

Final Report

At the conclusion of the project the student will submit a final report to ARD that includes a brief description of the project, budget/expenditure summary and a summary of the findings. A one-page executive summary should be included which provides potential impacts of the study. A copy of the thesis should accompany the final report.

Research Presentation

Each student is expected to present their findings to one of the following:

UNL Undergraduate Research Conference
Nebraska Academy of Sciences Annual Meeting
Professional meeting

The student is required to notify the ARD Office prior to their presentation with the time and location so that ARD faculty can be encouraged to attend. Students are also encouraged to make presentations to the appropriate student club or organization and departmental seminars.

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SELECTION CRITERIA

September 26, 1997

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Students will be selected for the program based on how their thesis proposal meets the following criteria:

1. Research addresses issues in agriculture, biology, human resources and natural resources important to ARD;
2. Originality of research;
3. Potential for successful collaboration with faculty;
4. The potential for the proposed thesis research experience to contribute to the student's career goals;
5. Appropriateness of proposed budget, including matching funds;
6. Distribution of projects throughout disciplines; and
7. Preference in the selection process will be given to students enrolled in AGRI 299H (*Honors Thesis Seminar*).